

CLAIMS

1. A method of mixing a volume of fluid material which includes creating an accelerating radial inward flow of fluid (A) which converges to create an unrestricted axial flow (B) within the volume of fluid.
2. A method of mixing a volume of fluid material according to Claim 1, in which the accelerating radial flow is produced by causing relative movement between a pair of opposed wall portions (20, 10; 37, 30; 53, 56).
3. A method of mixing a volume of fluid material according to Claim 2, in which one of said opposed wall portions (20; 37; 53) is moved reciprocally relative to the other (10; 30; 56).
4. A method of mixing a volume of fluid material according to Claim 2, in which said unrestricted axial flow takes place through an opening in the central region of one of said opposed wall portions.
5. Mixing apparatus which includes a container (1; 50) for holding a volume of fluid to be mixed, said container having an internal wall portion (20; 37; 53) dividing the container into first and second chambers and which has an opening therein (21; 38) providing communication between the two chambers, the first chamber including a further wall portion (10; 30; 56) which is spaced from the internal wall portion, and in which said wall portions are relatively movable to vary the volume of the first chamber

whereby such relative movement causes an accelerating radial inward flow of fluid (A) between said wall portions which converges to create an unrestricted axial flow (B) through said opening.

6. Mixing apparatus according to Claim 5, in which the maximum dimension of the opening is greater than 20% of the maximum dimension of the internal wall portion

7. Mixing apparatus according to Claim 5, in which said container is lined by a flexible bag (3) which holds the volume of fluid.

8. Mixing apparatus according to Claim 7, in which the or each moveable wall portion is recessed (27, 28) to receive a rolled-back portion of the bag.

9. Mixing apparatus according to Claim 5, in which said further wall portion (10; 30) is fixed with a side wall (11; 31) of the container and said internal wall portion moves relative to said side wall.

10. Mixing apparatus according to Claim 5, in which said further wall portion (30) forms a bottom wall of the container and is provided with an opening (34) having a valve (49).